DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 380 758 CS 012 038

AUTHOR Ranger, Linda
TITLE Improving Reading Comprehension through a Multi-Faceted Approach Utilizing Drama.
PUB DATE Apr 95
NOTE 35p.; M.A. Project, Kean College of New Jersey.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Dissertations/Theses - Undetermined (040)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Acting; Comparative Analysis; *Drama; *Dramatics; Grade 6; Intermediate Grades; Middle Schools; Reading Ability; Reading Aloud to Others; *Reading Attitudes; *Reading Comprehension; Reading Research; Reading Skills
IDENTIFIERS *Learning across the Curriculum; Middle School Students; New Jersey

ABSTRACT

Research supports that drama should be an integral part of the elementary and secondary curriculum. Utilizing drama strategies enriches learning in the reading program, the literature program, and the areas of oral language development, nonverbal communication, vocabulary development, listening skills, thinking skills, and creative writing. Yet, using drama strategies is often overlooked in the reading program. A study attempted to determine if reading comprehension increases through the utilization of drama strategies. A total of 50 students from two sixth-grade reading classes in a middle class suburban middle school in New Jersey were examined. The control sample was instructed through traditional cognitive methods. They read the play "The Monkey's Paw" silently. The experimental sample utilized drama strategies--they read the same play aloud. Both samples were tested. The results of the testing were analyzed and compared. The final results indicated that students who used drama strategies scored significantly higher than those students instructed through traditional cognitive methods. Further, the control sample was far less enthusiastic about the play than the experimental sample. It was observed that control group students, while reading the play and answering questions about it, were impatient and restless. By contrast, the experimental group students read the play with great joy and absolutely loved the denouement. Comprehension of the script was increased through the acting out of the moments of the play and the viewing of the play. (Contains a table of data, 40 references, and two appendixes of test scores.) (Author/TB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 380 758

IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH A MULTI-FACETED APPROACH UTILIZING DRAMA

BY

LINDA RANGER

Accepted
3/30/95
Albert J. Mazurkiewicz

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts

Kean College of New Jersey

April 1995

CS 012 035

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
L. Ranger
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ABSTRACT

Research supports that drama should be an integral part of the elementary and secondary curriculum. Utilizing drama strategies enriches learning in the reading program, the literature program, and the areas of oral language development, nonverbal communication, vocabulary development, listening skills, thinking skills, and creative writing. Yet, using drama strategies are often overlooked in the reading program. The purpose of this study was to determine if reading comprehension increased through the utilization of drama strategies.

The sample for the research was drawn from sixth grade students attending a middle class suburban middle school in New Jersey. A total of fifty students in two sixth grade reading classes were tested. The control sample was instructed through traditional cognitive methods. The experimental sample utilized drama strategies. Both samples were tested. The results of the testing were analyzed and compared.

The final results indicated that students who used drama strategies scored significantly higher than those students instructed through traditional cognitive methods.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

After years of teaching and directing plays, Arline Corbett, a fellow teacher, suggested and convinced me to obtain a master's degree as a Reading Specialist at Kean College. I owe a great deal to her.

I also need to thank Jacqueline Pfennig for her support and encouragement during this project.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Mazurkiewicz for his patience and guidance.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this paper to my mother and father, Audrea and Alfred Ranger, for all the years of love, guidance, and support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page Number
I.	Abstract	ii
II.	Acknowledgements	iii
III.	List of Tables	vi
III.	Improving Reading Comprehension Through a Multi-faceted Approach Utilizing Drama	
	Introduction	1
	Hypothesis	3
	Procedures	4
	Results	5
	Conclusions and Implications	6
IV.	Reading Comprehension and Drama: Related Literature	7
V.	References	22
VI.	Appendices	26
	Appendix A	27
	Appendix B	28

LIST OF TABLES

		Page Number
I.	Means, Standard Deviation, and *t* Test Results Between the Samples on the Various Measures	5

"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages"
(Shakespeare, 1598).

All the world is a stage, especially the classroom. Utilizing drama has proven to be a strong and effective strategy of providing opportunities for the student to acquire reading skills, listening skills, speech skills, cognitive skills, and a strong sense of self worth. Because of these elements, drama works effectively increasing comprehension.

"The origins of drama probably go back all the way to the time when history was passed on by a storyteller. As far back as 15,000 BC there is evidence on the walls of caves of people dancing, hunting and pantomiming"(Brockett and Brockett, 1985). Drama originated "on the cultures of primitive societies, whose members, it is thought, used primitive dances to propitiate the supernatural powers that were believed to control events crucial to their survival" (Groliers, 1992). Primitive societies used drama as a means of learning, communicating and survival.

Using drama has always been a means of expressing the emotions of human beings. As children we play make believe with our siblings and peers. We sing, we dance, we take on other roles with ease, playing many roles. As we get older we don't get to use that creativity that is in all of us. "Educational theatre involves teaching basic life skills. By stimulating creative thinking and problem solving, you not only show students how to conceptualize and execute ideas, you also teach the importance of personal commitment, cooperative work, and goal setting" (Poisson, 1994).

Research suggests that utilizing the drama in the classroom is effective in increasing comprehension, if in fact, it can be proven to be significant value in improving comprehension.

"Research supports the link between dramatic play and cognitive and literate skills. Correlational studies have consistently found positive associations between quality of preschool children's dramatic play and various abilities" (Risemberg&Zimmerman, 1992). Risemberg's and Zimmerman's study focused on using drama to increase children's writings.

Research by Stewig and Buege (1994), focused on using drama in the elementary classroom and that when used, drama made reading meaningful and increased comprehension. " The material, the discussion-questioning segment, the playing of an idea, and evaluation" increased comprehension.

A study by Birdwhistell (1974) focused on facial expressions and its use of conveying meaning. He concluded that a student dramatizing a story uses facial and bodily movements to communicate an idea, thus increasing comprehension while Moffett and Wagner (1976), suggested that early experiences with movement and pantomime using drama and music increases vocabulary comprehension.

Pellegrini and Galda examined the effects of thematic fantasy play, children enacting roles and themes from stories, and its effect on story comprehension. Children exposed to drama utilize thinking, reading, movement, listening and feeling which would increase comprehension.

DuPont (1992), used fifth-grade remedial readers and creative drama as an instructional strategy, to measure the growth of reading comprehension when children were actively involved in story dramatization.

A study by Moore and Caldwell (1993), compared the effects of planning activities using drama and drawing with that of traditional planning activities using

discussion and narrative writing. Drama activities included narrative pantomime, improvisation, group movement, poetry dramatization, and dialogue improvisation. The drawing activities included the drawing of characters, caricatures, imaginary places, beginning and ending scenes, facial expressions, x-ray pictures, personal experiences, fantasy experiences, action scenes. After the drama and drawing activities the experimental group wrote their first draft of narrative composition. The control group used initial discussion focusing on aspects of narrative writing such as plot, characterization, and setting. After the discussion the control group spent up to 30 minutes writing the first draft of narrative composition. The drafts were analyzed as data for the effects of planning activities. Moore and Caldwell concluded that drama and drawing were exciting means of rehearsing children as a prewriting technique and when drama and drawing are used the child's writing will improve. The children in the experimental group utilized their thinking, listening, speaking, reading, writing and kinesic skills, which increased their comprehension.

Utilizing drama strategies appears to enrich learning in the reading program, the literature program, and the areas of oral language development, nonverbal communication, vocabulary development, listening skills, thinking skills and creative writing.

Hypothesis

To provide additional evidence on this topic, the following study was undertaken. For the purpose of this study it was hypothesized that reading comprehension would not be improved in students who are taught through a multi-faceted approach utilizing drama when compared to the comprehension of a matched sample not exposed to drama.

Procedures

The subjects in this experiment were fifty sixth grade students attending Thorne Middle School in Middletown, New Jersey during the 1994 -1995 school year. The control sample was created of an English class of twenty-five students which met third period of the school day while the experimental sample was an English class of twenty-five students that met seventh period of the school day.

The control sample was presented with twenty vocabulary words from the one act play "The Monkey's Paw." Working in groups, the students defined the words, identified the part of speech, and created sentences for the vocabulary words. Each word was discussed to clarify definitions. The students were given study guide questions, prepared by the teacher, for the three scenes in the one act play. The students were given a story map to identify the parts of plot. The students were then instructed to read the play silently, and answer the study guide questions and story map in writing. An open discussion followed upon completion of the assignment. The discussion opened with a question: What was the mood of the characters in the beginning of the play? Discussion continued focusing on the study guide questions and the story map. The class was given a written assignment: Extending the Plot. Upon completion of the written assignment, the students read aloud their versions of what might have happened after the story ended. The students were given a test focusing on vocabulary, parts of plot, and characterization.

The experimental sample was presented with the identical list of vocabulary words. In groups, the students defined each word, identified the part of speech, and each group was assigned four of the words to create a skit, utilizing the words, and perform it. The class read the play aloud. A discussion followed focusing on the motivations and characteristics, both physical and behavioral, of the characters in the play. The students were then assigned parts and specific pages to memorize.

The students were responsible for finding the necessary props and costumes to perform the one act play, "The Monkey's Paw." A discussion followed focusing on the characters in action both physically and behaviorally. The students were given the identical test as the control sample. The test consisted of twenty matching vocabulary words valued at two points each, and ten multiple choice questions valued at six points each. The results of the test for each sample were analyzed and compared.

Results

The results of this experiment as shown in Table I indicates that

Table 1

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	*t*
Experimental	96.2	5.68	3.76
Control	88.6	6.70	

sig. <.01

the experimental sample scored 7.6 higher than the control sample. The *t* test result of 3.76 indicates a significant difference between the means below the .01 level. In the experimental sample there were twelve scores of 100, six scores of 95, three scores of 90, and four scores of 85. The control sample achieved two scores of 100, five scores of 95, eight scores of 90, six scores of 85, two scores of 80 and two scores of 75. The greatest number of errors resulted in questions focusing on plot sequence or the theme.

Conclusions and Implications

The hypothesis that reading comprehension will not be improved when students used dramatization as an adjunct to learning was rejected since the evidence is clear that the "drama" sample made significantly higher scores.

The control sample was far less enthusiastic about the play than the experimental sample. It was observed that the students, while reading and answering the study guide questions, were restless, making comments such as; "This is boring" or "I can't follow this." When the students finished reading the play some comments were; "Oh, I thought he'd be okay," or "So, what happened to Herbert?"

The experimental sample enjoyed dramatizing the vocabulary, read the play aloud with great enthusiasm and absolutely loved the denouement. Each student in the experimental sample was given three to four pages of script to dramatize. They memorized lines, brought in props and costumes, and dramatically reenacted the play. As one group performed, the other students watched the plot unfold. Comprehension of the script was increased through the acting out of the moments of the play and the viewing of the play. As one group of students was performing, I found the other students reading along with the script, as well as, watching the characters in action.

The technique of dramatization as suggested in the procedure appears to be a valuable aid to comprehension and should be incorporated by teachers in similar situations.

Reading Comprehension and Drama: Related Literature

"Drama, derived from the Greek verb dran, meaning 'to act' or 'to do,' refers to actions or deeds as they are performed in a theatrical setting for the benefit of a body of spectators" (Grolier, 1993). Drama, however, belonged to men and women long before the Greeks traveled to Athens for a Dionysian festival. Before there was a stage utilizing written scripts, drama existed in cultures of primitive societies.

Berthold (1972) states, "Theatre is as old as mankind." Primitive forms of theatre include the hunting pantomime of the ice age peoples, through the many different types of drama of modern times. " The theatre of primitive peoples rests on the broad foundation of primary, vital impulses. From them it draws its mysterious powers of magic conjuration, metamorphosis - from the hunting spell of the stone age nomads, from the harvest and fertility dances of the first tillers of the fields, from initiation rites, totemism,and shamanism, and from various cults." It is human nature to perform, taking on various roles no matter the circumstance.

Men and women communicated with one another either through sounds, utterances, or spoken language using drama to convey meaning. Drama provided a means of worshiping, socializing, learning, and civilizing a society. Primitive people used props, costumes, masks, music, and dance. Evidence of these can be found in illustrations on the walls of caves (Berthold 1972).

Historians can follow the drama through one society after another along the time line of people. In the three millennia before Christ, Egypt's god-king was the sole powerful ruler and to him homage was paid through music, dance, and dramatic dialogue. Within the walls of the pyramids there is evidence of pantomimes, chants, and written scripts which were presented as mysteries in honor of Osiris, the most human of all gods (Berthold 1972). These dramas were used to teach people, a means of comprehension for their society.

We can follow drama through Persia and the birth of the passion play in 632

where performances were held in open air theatres, performed in the round, or under a large piece of tarp to protect the actors from bad weather. The history of India, Japan, China, Greece, Rome can be found in their dramas (Berthold, 1972).

The Middle Ages used traveling theatre companies to educate and entertain the masses. During the Renaissance period, the school drama was a part of the teaching curriculum at universities and colleges. The Baroque period saw the birth of the opera. The Elizabethan period was the time of William Shakespeare. This period paved the way to modern theatre. Shakespeare's plays are part of every English curriculum in the secondary schools in America (Brockett & Brockett, 1985).

Human beings love the function of play. Play releases us, it frees us from the worries of life. We enjoy the element of play, to take on other roles than ourselves . As babies we play with props,as toddlers we play with toys, as preschoolers we begin to socialize with others and begin to play pretend, we play fireman, policeman, doctor, or teacher. We dramatize scenes with props and sometimes costumes. We learn these things through imitating life, visually witnessing life, listening to life and touching and feeling life. It is our means of comprehending the world around us. "The place of conscious direction in education is to furnish the time, place, and materials which will draw out the best interests of the children" (Gulick, 1920). Utilizing drama in the classroom, whether it is creative drama, or a scripted drama, the teacher is using the very best of materials and activities for the best interest of the children.

Recent research has shown that utilizing drama in the classroom is effective in increasing reading comprehension.

"Reading is not taught in isolation, it is supported by thinking, listening, speaking, and writing abilities. In turn, learning to read supports the development of the other language abilities" (Tiedt, 1989). The child, when introduced to creative drama, makes use of his or her listening, thinking, speaking, and writing abilities.

According to Tiedt, listening comprehension is the primary way of learning language and it should continue throughout the school years. Teachers need to plan lessons that teach listening skills, for the two cannot be separated, which will increase reading comprehension. When students dramatize a story they develop greater comprehension of words and phrases they hear.

Increased reading comprehension can begin with a simple story reenactment. Children need to see how stories are structured and by acting out the moments in a story, they see first hand the sequence of the story. The elementary school teacher may read the story "Little Red Riding Hood." After reading the story, the teacher has the children portray the story by acting out the different parts. Story dramatization can be used to develop comprehension of entire selection (Stewig & Buege,1994). According to Ross and Roe (1977), children must make inferences about the reasons for actions of certain characters, the nature of a character, the feelings of a character. Children need to use critical thinking skills to determine whether the story is real or make believe. They must decide whether the characters are believable, too.

"Thinking is the foundation of all learning. Therefore it is essential that we be aware of the thinking processes that students engage in as they listen, speak, read, and write. Our teaching should reflect this awareness as we select strategies that reinforce the development of thinking skills" (Tiedt, 1989). According to Tiedt, the child acquires thinking skills in much the same manner as he or she acquires language in natural situations that involve using language. Utilizing dramatization in the classroom is designed to involve students in thinking that gradually becomes more sophisticated as the students delve beneath the surface of what they are reading and make meaning come alive through acting out a character, finding the purpose of the character, examining and recreating the emotions of the character. (Howe, 1968).

Children must pay close attention to the details in the story in order for the dramatization to be correct. "Visualization is the ability to picture what the written word is describing"(Ross and Roe 1977). The child's visualization skills are used to picture the setting and the characters involved in the story. This process incorporates the child's thinking, listening, and speaking abilities. The teacher can incorporate writing by following up the activity with written responses of the childrens attitude towards the different characters in the story (Stewig and Buege 1994).

According to Ross and Roe (l977), acting requires the same skills that are fundamental to reading. A child who acts out a story must both comprehend and express details of the plot, the character's personality, the meaning of the words, the sequence of the story, and the cause and effect relationships. When children dramatize a story, they make inferences about the reasons for the actions of the characters, they understand the characters' emotions, and can identify the incidents which lead to the main events in the story. Children also make use of critical reading skills because they sense the mood of the selection.

Only in recent years have educators recognized the value of utilizing creative drama in the classroom. Improvised drama, such as dramatic play, pantomime, story dramatization, are all forms of creative drama. The children themselves create the drama spontaneously as an expression of their feelings or interpretation of the characters in a story. "Creative drama can be an effective way to develop a child's reading proficiency. It is not meant to replace reading instruction, but it can be used as a supplementary tool for motivating children to read and for reinforcing reading skills in a way that makes reading fun...All four of the major language arts-listening, speaking, reading, and writing- are involved in creative drama. It motivates children to listen and speak, and encourages them to read and write as they research

background material for use in dramatizations" (Ross & Roe, 1977). Children who are aware that they will be dramatizing a story after it is read to them listen more intently as it is being read. According to Ross and Roe (1977), children listen for sequence, dialogue, main ideas, and details of the story. They listen carefully because they know they will have to recreate the story and the characters. While they are creating, they must listen respectfully to each other in order to communicate their ideas sensibly, combining listening with critical thinking.

"The teacher's role is to motivate, encourage, and help children to learn to read. To do this teachers must make reading meaningful, which means seeing how it looks from the child's point of view" (Smith, 1978). The teacher using drama encourages and motivates the children by making reading meaningful. While observing the children in drama, the teacher sees first hand the learning taking place from the child's point of view.

According to Stewig and Buege (1994), the classroom drama experiences are made up of four components.

1. The material. This is the stimulus. This is the idea used to motivate the lesson. Activities involving the senses should be used. The session should be structured to provide continuity, but open-ended as to provide opportunities for students to create responses.

2. The discussion-questioning segment. This is a teacher directed activity. The teacher shifts questioning strategies while working to make the most of the students ideas.

3. The playing of an idea. This stage varies depending on the age of the child. It may be used as a simple pantomime of a single activity or a simple movement such as leaping like a frog. This can be linked to a verbal activity. It can be as complex as enacting an entire story.

4. Evaluation. In this component children are encouraged to consider what they have done and decide if they could have done it more effectively.

Using these four components, the teacher is able to make reading meaningful and increase comprehension.

An early study by William E. Blank (1954) points out that children who have regular drama experiences in the classroom gain facility and expressiveness in many areas of language. Blank studied three aspects of children's development, voice qualities (articulation and tonal flexibility), personality factors, and vocabulary. Blank's study focused on two groups of school children, the experimental group which met weekly during the school year for creative drama, and the control group which did not meet. Blank administered pre and post tests in the areas of: vocabulary, personality, and voice quality. Blank's experimental group showed significant improvement in all three areas over the control group.

According to Borden (1970) dramatization of literature can greatly enhance children's comprehension of written material. He reported that some children had difficulty in understanding the morals to fables that were read to them. After having the children dramatize the fables, the children understood the morals after reliving the fables.

Galda's (1982) research of 108 kindergarten through second grade children showed significant gains in story comprehension when creative drama activities were used as opposed to discussion or drawing activities. She concluded that children developed a sense of story through creative drama, the children were able to understand the characters in the story, by acting out the character's behavior, along with the sequence of the story.

Cox (1989) found a strong link in her research between drama and reading. Through her research and experiences she concluded that dramatization motivates

reading, enhances vocabulary, develops critical reading, develops greater comprehension, promotes more reading, and encourages life time readers.

" Research supports the link between dramatic play and cognitive and literate skills. Correlational studies have consistently found positive associations between quality of preschool children's dramatic play and various abilities" (Risemberg, Zimmerman 1992). There are four major elements responsible for the enhancement of writing: cognitive, linguistic, motoric, and affective. When children participate in drama, they think, speak, move, and feel. Dramatic play is beneficial to the writing development because the two areas verbal communication and narrative schema share important features.

A study by Risemberg and Zimmerman (1992) investigated the effects of two components in dramatic play - motoric and emotional enactment and how they effected children's autobiographical writing. The development of writing is viewed as evolving out of children's inherent tendencies to create and share stories. Teachers who use this approach, allowing children's writing abilities to emerge naturally, tend to overlook the one valuable activity which comes natural to children is dramatic play. Dramatic play occurs spontaneously in all children and it provides the very narrative structure needed in writing.Their study focused on seventy-one third-grade inner city students in three classrooms. All three classes scored equivalent in pretest writing performance, and were assigned the following conditions: full mime enactment, motoric mime enactment only (no facial expressions) and control group; verbal story telling. After receiving exposure to mime, experimental students enacted and then wrote two emotional autobiographical stories, while the control group verbalized their stories and then wrote them. The full mime group outscored the control group by four out of five writing samples. The motoric mime group was intermediate. Risemberg and Zimmerman concluded that mime, movement, and dramatic play activities

should be included in elementary school writing curriculum.

A study by Birdwhistell (1974) focused on facial expressions when adults are conversing face to face. He estimated that 35 percent of communication is transmitted through verbal language and 65 percent through nonverbal cues. Sinatra and Gemake (1983) took Birdwhistell's study further, they discuss a typical everyday occurrence. "As you are walking down the street, you see a close friend, your eyes meet, a smile of recognition is on your face, and your friend reciprocates the same smile. Communication has occurred, meaning has been passed, but not a sound has been made." Meanings which are communicated through bodily actions or facial expressions are not taught formally they are learned intuitively through human interaction. The student dramatizing a story utilizes body actions and facial expressions, thus conveying meaning.

Lefevre (1970) defines kinesics to include, "all bodily gestures, nudges, nods, finger, hand, and arm signals, shrugs and facial gestures such as winks, smiles, sneers, and leers - the whole gamut of expressive actions, so important...in interpretation and in the small events of daily life." Kinesics is the full mime enactment on which Risemberg and Zimmerman did their study. According to Lefevre, while interpreting a story through drama, the student makes use of all bodily gestures to convey a character. The whole gamut of expression, bodily and facially, simultaneously occur while expressing feelings of the character, thus increasing the understanding of the character and the story.

Rubin (1980) used finger plays to link sign and gesture to language. Simple poems were used to dramatize with children using their fingers and hands to express the meaning of what they were reciting. Rubin believes that finger plays were effective in helping children develop good body movement, gestures, and recall. This was a simple activity of dramatizing a poem, using fingers, hands, gestures to carry

meaning. The students easily recalled the poem by acting it out.

A study by Saltz and Dixon (1982) focused on recall through dramatization. Their research had subjects who physically acted out given sentences, using either real or imaginary objects, recalled these sentences better than did subjects who just verbalized the sentence. Through dramatization, the student recalls information more effectively by physicalizing and internalizing the character.

Stewig (1979) suggested that students should study professional signs and gestures. Younger children could imitate traffic police and their crossing guards. Older students can demonstrate the signs of football linesman, baseball catchers, umpires, coaches and basketball referees. Students acting out these movements convey meaning.

Another person to study and examine is the maestro in the orchestra pit (Sinatra 1983). Students can be taught the intricacies and dynamics in a musical piece are controlled through facial expression and the body actions of the maestro. After listening to the music, the students could dramatize a story. Music can be used as background for the creation of characters and plot development. The students could write the story and then act it out through feelings, thus incorporating; writing, listening, speaking, kinesics, and affect.

Affect, another component of dramatic play, utilizes feelings or emotions to increase comprehension. The very essence of portraying a character nonverbally or verbally relies on the character's emotions. The student performing the character draws from his or her own emotions. A study by Bartlett and Santrock (1979) motivated their students in happy or sad moods. Next, they told the students a happy or sad story. They concluded that children who were in the same mood as motivated, recalled significantly more key words of the story than the students who were not motivated in a particular mood. Increased comprehension was a result of

connecting listening, speaking, thinking, and feeling.

A study by Moffett and Wagner (1976) suggested that early experiences with movement and pantomime should be whole class, activities synchronized to rhythmic sound and music. "Underlying all language is sensitivity to the experiences of the senses and to mood and feeling; music has power to evoke these and provides a strong impetus first to bodily expression and then to language development." Combining music with the art of pantomime, children can be introduced to vocabulary that uses larger body movements. Reading from cards words such as; swing, stretch, push, pull, jump, and stomp, children experience reading the word and reinforce it by acting out the word. Characterization can be added to these movements as the children become leaves falling, snowflakes falling, butterflies, giants stomping, ghosts roaming, and witches haunting, as well as, the entire animal kingdom. The listening to the music, moving, and reading the cards enhances the comprehension of vocabulary development.

"Reading skills are developed through creative drama in a variety of ways. Children recognize the need for increasing their vocabularies because they have a real purpose for knowing the right words while they are in character" (Ross and Roe,1977). When children use words such as wicked, starving, or greedy from stories, they are clarifying and reinforcing meaning. According to Ross and Roe (1977), children are expanding their vocabularies by thinking of words which mean the same as the words they are acting out. "After a child has been involved in acting out a number of stories, his oral reading expression will begin to improve, for he will have begun to 'think the dialogue' in terms of oral presentation as he reads. He will be more aware of the clues to oral expression embodied in the punctuation if he has been guided to attend to such clues when preparing for a dramatization."

Movement and pantomime are excellent components to develop vocabulary

since the children can experience the feeling and meaning of the words (Sinatra, 1983). Using pantomime to consolidate material involves incorporating grammatical concepts which are introduced in the younger grades. "Nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs are better understood when children physically act them out in the sequential order found in basic sentences" (Stewig & Buege, 1994). An activity suggested by Stewig and Buege focuses on taking a simple sentence such as: "The huge elephant playfully sprayed water on the little elephant." This sentence would be more meaningful and enjoyable if a teacher had children portray the various parts of speech in the sentence. One child could portray the large elephant, another the little elephant. The adverb "playfully" could be presented by a child dancing playfully around the elephants. The verb "sprayed" could easily be portrayed by another child. This activity includes reading, listening, moving, thinking, visually representing the parts of speech, and feeling; all of which convey meaning to reading.

" Visual connections between words, parts of speech, and sentence structure help children understand the English language system. When these associations are enhanced through drama, they are more apt to be internalized. Eighty percent of what people learn is through visualization, and drama certainly is visual" (Stewig & Buege, 1994). The visual connection is not only effective through of a dramatization observation, it is extremely beneficial for the student participating in the drama, enhancing comprehension.

Another way to introduce new vocabulary words is through a theatrical mode called " Word Theatre" (Boning, 1978). He suggests one student performs a skit demonstrating the meaning of a word, while the other students attempt to tell the precise meaning of the word being acted out. Students are actively involved in a multidimensional verbal and nonverbal approach to the learning of each new word. "Word Theatre" is a unique way to build vocabulary.

A study by Pellegrini and Galda examined the effects of thematic fantasy play, children enacting roles and themes from stories, and its effect on story comprehension. Pellegrini and Galda chose three modes of story reconstruction training conditions: thematic-fantasy play, adult-lead discussion, or drawing. Their subjects were 108 children, 54 boys and 54 girls, all which attend a rural northeast Georgia elementary school, grades K, 1, and 2. The groups were randomly assigned in in each grade to one of the three treatment conditions. The individual groups were read a story and exposed to the appropriate training condition: thematic fantasy play, discussion, or drawing. After the session the students were given a criterion referenced test. Three sessions were covered for each group. Each session lasted thirty minutes and included reading, training, and testing. On the completion of the third session, individual students were asked to retell the story and it was audiotaped. Second graders' performance on all comprehension was superior to the younger children's comprehension. The thematic fantasy play was the most effective enhancer of all measures of comprehension, especially in kindergartners. Pellegrini and Galda concluded that kindergartners' and first graders' story comprehension was improved when they reconstruct a story through thematic- fantasy play. Thematic-fantasy play is still another term for dramatization. Children are utilizing thinking, reading, movement, listening, and feeling, all of which increase comprehension.

In a study by DuPont (1992), creative drama was used as an instructional strategy to enhance the reading comprehension of fifth-grade remedial readers. The purpose of the study was to measure the growth of reading comprehension when children were exposed to a treatment of creative drama. The sample was comprised of three groups, each with seventeen fifth-grade remedial reading students. The first group, the treatment group, read selected children's literature stories over a six week period and participated in creative drama activities. After the stories were read both

silently and orally, students were involved with dramatization of the entire story in its appropriate sequence. They were given a criterion referenced test on each Friday. In addition to this, the students were also involved in verbal and pantomimed extensions of the story. The second group received a variation of the treatment group. They read the same stories as group one, and were given the same criterion referenced test, but did not participate in any dramatization. The third group, the control group, received only its current program during the study. That is, whatever remedial reading program was in place at the time, which consisted of the regular reading skills instruction, without the children's stories and dramatization. According to the findings, group two, those who only read and discussed the stories, scored significantly lower. They were not engaged in any creative thinking or writing activities during the study. Group three scores were the lowest. According to DuPont, drama helped students to score higher because the children inadvertently gained valuable practice in creating clearer mental images of written material as they were called upon to act out what they read. DuPont concluded that comprehension skills are enhanced through a reading program that utilizes the strategy of creative drama.

As the child moves from the elementary school to the secondary school, creative drama and scripted drama are effective strategies to use in enhancing reading comprehension. "The world of play is-potentially-a very exciting one for the adolescents. It seems to have a greater immediacy than the world of the novel or short story: no narrator stands between the reader and the action, and the action itself is speeded up. There are few unimportant events; the conflicts are sharply drawn and rapidly developed. The dramatic questions often change rapidly, focusing attention on the rapidity of the action" (Howes, 1968). According to Howes, a multiplicity of approaches to the drama increases both understanding and interest. Through class discussion, portraying a character in a scene or through a monologue,

background knowledge of the stage, and the examination of the relationship of the character to the theme are facets which enhance meaning. Training students in visualizing the part that action plays in bringing to life the printed word, is a means of helping students toward an insight into the use of language. Students find characters memorable, and they remember the character long after they may have forgotten many of the things he said and did. "As characters come alive for students, the play itself comes alive...The most important fact about drama-a- fact which separates it from all other literary genres-is that we watch characters in action. The most obvious result of this fact is the sense of immediacy felt by the audience. If a play is to be taught not merely as a 'story' developing 'conflicts,' but rather as a literary experience different from other literary experiences, our conventional approaches to dramatic form must be supplemented by ways which help students become aware of their role as members of an audience" (Howes,1968). The audience cannot be left out as students watch a play or visualize it in "the theatre of the mind." Teachers need to make students constantly aware of themselves as audience. "Invite them to savor the feelings of superiority that come from their superior knowledge of facts and events; invite them to sense the wonder of tragedy, the incongruity of comedy: the suspense in both. Constantly remind them of the knowledge which they have that the characters do not" (Howes,1968).

Research shows that drama should be an integral part of the elementary and secondary curriculum. Drama leads to knowledge about language and the development of language skills. It connects thinking, listening, speaking, reading, writing, and kinesics. Drama embraces a totality of communication. Utilizing drama strategies enriches learning in the reading program, the literature program, and the areas of oral language development, nonverbal communication, vocabulary development, listening skills, thinking skills, and creative writing.

References

References

Albert, E. (1994). Drama in the classroom. *Middle School Journal, 20-24.*

Aristotle. (1536). *Aristotelis poetica.* Venetis: In aedibus haeredum Aldi, et Andreae Asulani soceri.

Bartlett & Santrock J.W. (1979). Affect dependent episodic memory in young memory. *Child Development, 50, 513-518.*

Berthold, M. (1972). *A history of world theater.* New York: Unger Publishing.

Birdwhistell, R. (1974). The language of the body: The natural environment of words. In Silversteins, A (Ed.): *Human Communication: Theoretical Explorations.* Hillsdale, New Jersey, Erlbaum Assoc.

Blank, W. E. (1954). The effectiveness of creative dramatics in developing voice, vocabulary and personality. *Speech Monographs, 21: 251.*

Bloom, B. C. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: cognitive domain.* New York: David McKay.

Boning, R. (1979). *World theatre: Starring the students.* New York: Barnell Loft Ld.

Borden, S. (1970). *Plays as teaching tools in the elementary school.* New York: Parker.

Brockett O. G. & Brockett L. (1985). *Drama.* World Book Encyclopedia. p. 268.

Burns, Roe, Ross. (1985). *Teaching reading.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Buege, C. & Stewig J. W. (1994). *Dramatizing literature in the whole language classroom.* New York: Teacher's College Press.

Bussis, A. (1982). Burn it at the casket: research, reading instruction, and children's learning of the first r. *Phi Delta Kappan, 64, 237-241.*

Carr, G. A., & Flynn R. M. (1994). Exploring classroom literature through drama: a specialist and a teacher collaborate. *Language Arts, 71, 38-41.*

Cox, C. (1988). *Teaching language arts.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

DuPont, S. (1992). the effectiveness of creative drama as an instructional strategy to enhance the reading comprehension skills of fifth-grade remedial readers. *Reading Research and instruction, 31, (3) 41-52.*

Galda, L. (1982). Playing about a story: It's impact on comprehension. *The Reading*

Teacher, 36, 52-55.

Graves, D. (1982). *Writing: teachers and children at work.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Grolier Electronic Publishing, Inc. Time Line (1992). *1590 History of the theatre.*

Gulick, L. H. (1920). *A philosophy of play.* New York: Association Press.

Howes, A. B. (1968). *Teaching literature to adolescents plays.* Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Co.

Hoyt, L. (1990). *Jazzing up reading through expressive arts.* In N. Cecil (Ed.), Literacy in the 90's (pp. 128-136). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

Hoyt, L. (1992). Many ways of knowing: using drama, oral interactions, and the visual arts to enhance reading comprehension. *The Reading Teacher, 8, 580-584.*

Lefevre, C. A. (1970). *Linguistics, english and the language arts.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Lounsbury, John H. *As I see it.* Columbus: Ohio: NMSA.

Moffet, J. and Wagner B. (1976). *Student centered language arts and reading k-13.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Moore, B. & Caldwell H. (1993). Drama and drawing for narrative writing in primary grades. *Journal of Educational Research.* Vol. 87, 100-110.

Pellegrini, A. D. & Galda, L. (1982). The effects of thematic-fantasy play training on the development of children's story comprehension. *American Educational Research Journal.* Vol. 19, 443-452.

Risemberg, R. & Zimmerman, B. (1992). Using mime to improve children's writing of autobiographical narratives. *Journal of Research and Development in Education, 25, 232-239.*

Ross, E. & Roe, B. (1977). Creative drama builds proficiency in reading. *The Reading Teacher, 30, 383-387.*

Rubin, D. (1980). *Teaching Elementary Language Arts.* New York: Harper & Row.

Shakespeare, William. (1598). *As you like it. Act II, sc. 7, line 139.*

Shallcross, D. (1985). *Teaching creative behavior:* Buffalo, New York: Barely Limited.

Sinatra, R. & Gemake, J. (1983). *Using the right brain in the language arts.* Illinois, Charles C. Thomas Publisher.

Smith, F. (1978). *Reading without nonsense.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Stauffer, R. G. (1969). *Teaching reading as a thinking process.* New York: Harper & Row.

Stewig, J. W. (1979). Nonverbal communication: I see what you say. *Language Arts, 56, 150-155.*

Stewig, J. W. & Buege, C. (1994). *Dramatizing literature in whole language classrooms.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Swenson, J. E., (1994). The lit book isn't all there is. *English Teacher Journal, 83-85.*

Tiedt, I. (1989). *Reading / thinking / writing: a holistic language and literacy program for the k-8 classroom.* Boston: Allyn and Bacca.

Appendices

Appendix A

Results of Test Scores

Control Sample

Period 2

Number of Student	Score	Errors
1	75	5
2	80	4
3	100	0
4	85	3
5	80	4
6	90	2
7	85	3
8	90	1
9	85	3
10	95	1
11	90	2
12	85	3
13	95	1
14	90	2
15	95	1
16	90	2
17	95	1
18	75	5
19	100	0
20	85	3
21	90	2
22	95	1
23	85	3
24	90	2
25	90	2

Total # of Students	25
Total# 100	2
Total # 95	5
Total # 90	8
Total # 85	6
Total # 80	2
Total # 75	2

Appendix B

Results of Test Scores

Experimental Sample

Period 7

Number of Student	Score	Errors
1	95	1
2	100	0
3	95	1
4	85	3
5	100	0
6	95	1
7	85	3
8	100	0
9	90	2
10	100	0
11	90	2
12	90	2
13	100	0
14	95	1
15	95	1
16	100	0
17	100	0
18	100	0
19	100	0
20	85	3
21	100	0
22	85	3
23	100	0
24	95	1
25	100	0

Total # Students 25

Total # 100 12
Total # 95 6
Total # 90 3
Total # 85 4